

EQUITY FOR ALL

THE CSU-AAUP REFORM CAUCUS

Adjunct Professor Retirement Benefits in SERS (State Employees Retirement System)

This document is intended to provide orientation to part-time/adjunct professors to help them find the information they are looking for about their pensions. It is as accurate as we could make it, and we will update it as needed. SERS pension information isn't always straightforward, and the Comptroller's web page on retirement, with the many existing plans in existence, is labyrinthine.

Q: When I'm hired, what options do I have for choosing (or refusing) a pension plan?

Article 14.2.1 of the [Collective Bargaining Agreement](#) says, "Part-time members shall have the right to join or refuse to join the State Employees Retirement System or the Alternate Retirement Plan for Higher Education. Part-time members who are currently enrolled in the Teachers Retirement System (TRS) may apply university service to TRS."

[Here is a chart comparing the current options.](#)

Q: I've been working for a while in the state university system. How do I know if I'm in a pension plan and which one I'm in?

A: Look at your most recent pay stub. You can see if funds are being taken out for your pension and in some cases it will say which pension you are in. If it doesn't say which plan you are in, check with your HR department.

Also, check to see what information is available in your files in [Core-CT](#). Contact your HR department to get your login information if you've misplaced it.

Q: I don't have a SERS pension fund, but instead I opted for the Alternative Retirement Program. How can I learn more about it?

A: Here is the planning and information page for those who have a alternative pension plan with Empower (previously Prudential): <https://www.ctdcp.com/tools.html>

Q: How can I find out how much my state pension would be if I stopped working for the state this year?

A: Check your personal records to see how long you have been working in the state university system. Then go to your HR Department and see if their records match yours.

They might have trouble with this if you've worked in multiple places in the CSU system, which is why your records may be important. They should tell you how many years of vesting service you've accrued, your years of actual service and what your credited hours are.

Then, go to <https://www.osc.ct.gov/rbsd/stateretire.htm>, find the calculator for your pension plan and plug in the numbers to get an estimate of what you would receive based on your service so far (though it won't be perfectly accurate and the amounts will presumably change if you retire later). In order to use the calculator, you will need to know a) how many years of **actual service** you have accrued b) how many years of **vesting service** you've accrued, and c) what your **credited service** is.

To be **vested in SERS** means you have a right to retirement benefits. You are vested after 10 years. According to the Comptroller's pages, every year worked part-time is counted as one year for the purpose of calculating **vesting service**. **Actual service for part-time faculty and credited service** is calculated on percentages of years you have worked. You might want to keep careful records of how many credits you taught over the years and how many classes each semester, in case you have worked in multiple places in the state system; records could be missing or incorrect in some instances.

See this page for an overview of how credited service is calculated (scroll down for part-time service; also there is a link on the left that explains how your average salary is calculated): <https://www.osc.ct.gov/empret/RetireCalculator1/Glossary.aspx?Term=2&Cat=1>

Please note that if you stop working for more than a year, and then return to service, there are additional issues related to calculated service time. Be sure you know what this will involve by reading up about your plan and checking with HR before making a decision.

Q: I'm thinking of leaving state service permanently before retirement age. What can I do with my pension funds?

If you decide to leave state service before retirement age, you have two avenues:

If you are **not** vested, you can take your SERS funds with you in two ways:

1. Transfer your funds to another qualified plan (like TIAA-CREF, for example)
2. Take a cash payout (but there would be a penalty associated with that)

If you are vested, then at retirement age you can go back to your HR office to process your pension.

Additional Resources

CCSU's HR page has links for the different pension plans:
<https://www.ccsu.edu/hr/employeebenefits/retirement.html>